

§ 1.1908

property or from demanding, in the alternative, either the return of property or the payment of its value.

§ 1.1908 Omissions not a defense.

The failure of the Commission to comply with any provision in this regulation shall not serve as a defense to the debt.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFSET—CONSUMER REPORTING AGENCIES—CONTRACTING FOR COLLECTION

§ 1.1911 Demand for payment.

(a) Written demands for payment shall be made promptly upon a debtor in terms which inform the debtor of the consequences of failure to cooperate. A total of three progressively stronger written demands at not more than 30-day intervals will normally be made unless a response to the first or second demand indicates that a further demand would be futile and the debtor's response does not require rebuttal. In determining the timing of demand letters, the Commission will give due regard to the need to act promptly so that, as a general rule, if it becomes necessary to refer the debt to the Department of Justice for litigation, such referral can be made within one year of the agency's final determination of the fact and the amount of the debt. When necessary to protect the Government's interest (for example, to prevent the statute of limitations, 28 U.S.C. 2415, from expiring), written demand may be preceded by other appropriate actions under this chapter, including immediate referral for litigation.

(b) The initial demand letter will inform the debtor of:

(1) The basis for the indebtedness and the right of the debtor to request review within the agency;

(2) The applicable standards for assessing interest, penalties, and administrative costs (§§ 1.1940 and 1.1941 of this subpart) and;

(3) The date by which payment is to be made, which normally should not be more than 30 days from the date that the initial demand letter was mailed or hand-delivered.

(c) As appropriate to the circumstances, the Commission may in-

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clude either in the initial demand letter or in subsequent letters, matters relating to alternative methods of payment, policies with respect to use of consumer reporting agencies and collection services, the agency's intentions with respect to referral of the debt to the Department of Justice for litigation, and, depending on applicable statutory authority, the debtor's entitlement to consideration of waiver.

(d) The Commission will respond promptly to communications from the debtor, within 30 days whenever feasible, and will advise debtors who dispute the debt that they must furnish available evidence to support their contentions.

(e) If, either prior to the initiation of, at any time during, or after completion of the demand cycle, the Commission determines to pursue administrative offset, then the procedures specified in §§ 1.1912 and 1.1913 as applicable, will be followed. The availability of funds for offset and the agency's determination to pursue that remedy, release the agency from the necessity of further compliance with paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) of this section. If the agency has not already sent the first demand letter, the agency's written notification of its intent to offset must give the debtor the opportunity to make voluntary payment, a requirement which will be satisfied by compliance with the notice requirements of §§ 1.1912 and 1.1913 as applicable.

§ 1.1912 Collection by administrative offset.

(a) Collection by administrative offset will be undertaken in accordance with these regulations on all claims which are liquidated or certain in amount, in every instance in which such collection is determined to be feasible and not otherwise prohibited.

(1) Whether collection by administrative offset is feasible is a determination to be made by the agency on a case-by-case basis, in the exercise of sound discretion. The Commission will consider not only whether administrative offset can be accomplished practically, but also whether offset is best suited to further and protect all of the Government's interest. In appropriate circumstances, the Commission may